

**COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA  
DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL SERVICES  
DIVISION OF CONSOLIDATED LABORATORY  
SERVICES  
600 NORTH 5<sup>TH</sup> STREET  
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA 23219**

**1-866-493-1087**

<b>PACKAGING GUIDELINES FOR RABIES SUBMISSIONS</b>
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(February, 2003)

Introduction

All materials collected for rabies diagnosis are considered infectious, and appropriate handling and shipping precautions should be taken to insure the safety of health department personnel, transportation carriers, laboratory staff and the public in accordance with 49 CFR and Department of Transportation Regulations.

What to submit

No live animal will be accepted by the laboratory. The animal should be humanely euthanized without damage to the head. The head must then be removed from the body and submitted intact, including brainstem, for examination in accordance with the Department of Health's Office of Epidemiology's 2000 Rabies Control Guidelines [www.vdh.state.va.us/epi/rabiesguide.pdf]. Bats should be sent intact. When livestock are to be submitted, a veterinarian or properly trained individual should remove one-half of the brain hemisphere and submit these tissues for easier transport. In these large animal cases, cerebellum and brainstem are both required for examination for reliable diagnosis.

How to Package

When packaging rabies specimens, wear disposable gloves. All diagnostic specimens must be clearly labeled with a health department or animal control internal number or identifier and the specimen's species. Specimens must be packed in a triple packaging, consisting 1) a puncture-resistant, sealed primary packaging, absorbent material to prevent blood and body fluid leakage, 2) a leakproof secondary container, and finally 3) a rigid, refrigerated shipping container containing frozen cold packs and sufficient cushioning material. See diagram on the reverse side of package instructions.

*Suggested Materials for Use and Proper Handling*

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|------------------------|--|
| 1) Primary Container   | Ziplock bags or heavy-duty garbage bags appropriately sized for the specimens. If sharp objects protrude from the specimen (e.g. shattered bones,) wrap specimen first in several layers of newspaper. If specimen is freshly euthanized, include absorbent sheeting to absorb blood or other fluid. <b>Always tightly seal or fasten the primary container to contain the specimen.</b> |
| 2) Secondary Container | Metal can, heavy plastic pail or a heavy-duty plastic garbage bag. These must also be sealed to prevent leakage. The multi-part rabies submission form must be completely filled out and must include names and telephone numbers so results can be called outside of working hours. Forms must be enclosed in a plastic bag and taped to the outside of the secondary container.        |

- 3) Rigid Shipping Container      Tightly sealed, thick-walled Styrofoam containers with or without an exterior fiberboard liner. The secondary container is placed in this along with sufficient frozen cool packs and cushioning material to prevent damage to the specimen during transport.

When shipping more than one specimen in a container, be certain that: each specimen is individually labeled and bagged to prevent cross contamination; each is clearly identified; and a completed rabies submission form is included for each specimen. After securely taping the shipping container and addressing the package, thoroughly wash hands.

#### How to Label the Submitting Package

Apply a biohazard label to the outside of the rigid shipping container (available commercially) and mark the box with the following: **Diagnostic Specimen Enclosed**. Address the package to the following laboratory shipping information:

Department of General Services  
Division of Consolidated Laboratory Services      **OR**  
Sample Management, Room 151  
1 North 14<sup>th</sup> Street  
Richmond, VA 23219-3691  
ATTN: **RABIES**

Southwest Regional Laboratory  
165 East Valley Street  
Abingdon, VA 24210-2833  
ATTN: **RABIES**

**IMPORTANT NOTE: After MAY 12, 2003 DCLS will be at a new LOCATION!!**

Department of General Services  
Division of Consolidated Laboratory Services  
Sample Management, 1<sup>st</sup> floor  
600 North 5<sup>th</sup> Street  
Richmond, VA 23219  
Attn: **RABIES**

Rigid shipping containers which are not visibly contaminated with blood and/or body fluids may be surface-decontaminated and returned to the original shipper via the courier. **The submitter must clearly mark their containers with a complete and legible return address label.**

For additional rabies submission forms, please telephone DCLS Customer Service at (804) 786-3756. Any further questions concerning rabies submissions, telephone the Immunology laboratory at (804) 786-5142.

*Diagram of Packaging Instructions*

